

Status Report to the Legislature Regarding the TPEAC Master Work Plan

What is the purpose of this report?

The purpose of this report is to provide the final update on the work completed by the Transportation Permit Efficiency and Accountability Committee (TPEAC) given the following legislative direction:

- The Committee shall provide a summary report to the Legislature on December 31, 2003, and every six months thereafter that details the Committee's status and performance and its progress in implementing its master work plan.

Where are we now?

TPEAC's work is nearing completion and the group's efforts are focusing on closure. The sunset of TPEAC in March 2006 marks the end of a five-year multi-agency effort to improve environmental permitting for transportation projects. Since beginning in 2001, TPEAC has sought to improve the permitting process for transportation projects while maintaining high standards for environmental protection. The permitting tools and processes developed and enhanced by TPEAC and its subcommittees reflect the value of this endeavor. Multi-agency programmatic permits, web-based permit applications, watershed-based mitigation, and local permitting improvements are some of the TPEAC tools that are currently being implemented by the Department of Transportation (WSDOT), Cities and Counties and resource agencies to increase efficiency in transportation project permitting and environmental benefits. A recent audit completed by the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) of environmental permitting for WSDOT construction projects found that several of the projects seemed to be running more smoothly due to greater use of streamlining tools.

TPEAC Facts:

TPEAC was established in May 2001 with the passage of the Environmental Permit Streamlining Act (RCW 47.06 C). The Act was reauthorized by the Legislature in 2003, extending TPEAC through March 2006 to develop and demonstrate efficiency and accountability measures to improve transportation project permitting.

TPEAC Process

TPEAC brought together state legislators; state and local agencies; city, county, and business associations; the construction industry; environmental, labor, and tribal interests; and the Federal Highway Administration. Stakeholder participation has been high. The Committee has focused on all aspects of the transportation planning and review process in order to increase the predictability, inclusiveness, and efficiency of the regulatory process.

In addition to creating successful streamlining tools, the TPEAC process has been successful in building strong relationships and trust among participants and stakeholders. The work of TPEAC serves as a model for collaborative, multi-stakeholder efforts to increase regulatory efficiency while maintaining high environmental standards. This process of collaboration not only resulted in streamlining products, it fostered:

- Stronger, more functional inter-agency relationships;
- Increased respect, trust, and credibility among stakeholders;
- Increased understanding of environmental permitting and transportation project development processes.

Several efforts are currently underway to ensure that the work and relationships developed by TPEAC are not lost when TPEAC sunsets. A TPEAC web site is being completed to memorialize and communicate TPEAC's success of coordinating and streamlining the transportation permitting process. The web site will help ensure that the products, tools, and "lessons learned" from TPEAC are available within WSDOT and regulatory agencies and to others outside of the transportation field. The TPEAC is looking to the Office of Regulatory Assistance to carry on streamlining activities and relationships developed by TPEAC after TPEAC sunsets and to expand these efforts beyond just transportation projects. The Office of Regulatory Assistance is well positioned to bring state agencies, along with federal, local, and Tribal government representatives together to continue to streamline regulatory processes.

What does this report contain?

This report provides an update of the work outlined in the TPEAC Master Work Plan. This includes the work of the TPEAC subcommittees, other efforts funded by TPEAC, and plans for continuing streamlining efforts in the future.

A Collaborative Process

"The solution to a transportation problem often requires creative problem solving. . . A collaborative process, with many interests represented, can facilitate the development of innovative approaches to old problems. . . Collaborative approaches can help to integrate scarce agency resources, avoid duplication, and build trust among stakeholders. . ."

National Policy Consensus Center
2003 Transportation Colloquium
Report.

What are the accomplishments of the TPEAC subcommittees?

Two of the subcommittees established by TPEAC, the Watershed-Based Mitigation and Permit Delivery subcommittees, are active and currently working on wrapping up their efforts. Updates on the work of these two subcommittees, summaries of the work of the other subcommittees, and a status of the products and tools produced by these subcommittees are included in this section of the report.

1. Watershed-Based Mitigation Subcommittee

The Watershed-Based Mitigation subcommittee was established to develop a watershed-based mitigation approach for transportation projects. The idea was that mitigation projects that consider a project's effects and opportunities in a broader watershed context are more likely to have far-reaching and long-lasting environmental benefits than constraining site selection to the immediate transportation project area. The subcommittee has developed technical, policy, and procedural tools that facilitate the implementation of a watershed approach for environmental mitigation. The subcommittee is currently working on finalizing a schedule for integrating the technical, policy, and procedural tools to institutionalize the watershed-based approach to environmental mitigation. A detailed report on the work of the Watershed-Based Mitigation subcommittee can be found at:

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/environment/streamlineact/default.htm>.

What are the accomplishments of the Watershed-Based Mitigation subcommittee?

A. Watershed Characterization – One of the major accomplishments of the subcommittee was the development of a watershed characterization methodology. Watershed characterizations were completed for several transportation projects including SR-522, I-405 North Renton, I-405/SR-520, and SR-167. Potential mitigation sites generated from the

TPEAC Subcommittees

TPEAC legislation directed the establishment of several subcommittees including:

Watershed-Based Mitigation

Permit Delivery (formally known as pilot/one stop)

Programmatic Permit

Local Government task force

Compliance

Delegation of Federal Authority

Planning

What is a Watershed Approach?

A watershed approach seeks to understand natural resource impacts, assess the condition of environmental processes, and evaluate restoration options in a landscape context.

Using a watershed approach to permitting ensures that decisions on mitigation opportunities are evaluated on their potential to provide measurable environmental benefits at landscape scales, rather than just an on-site replacement of habitat lost in the transportation project.

SR-167 watershed characterization study are currently being evaluated for use as part of SR-167 project development.

B. Transportation Screening Tool -The subcommittee oversaw development of a screening tool designed to identify transportation projects that are located near landscape features that have a high likelihood of affecting WSDOT's ability to cost-effectively mitigate for environmental impacts. Types of landscape features include wetlands, floodplains, unstable slopes, areas of high intensity land use and high land values. The screening tool can use existing map products made by and for local agencies during land use planning under the Growth Management Act, and during watershed planning. Features identified in these maps can then be overlaid on the transportation project area, and an analysis conducted to assess the risk of facing high mitigation costs. Plans are underway to automate the screening tool into WSDOT's Environmental Work Bench. The Environmental Work Bench is a Geographic Information System (GIS) that includes several layers of information so that project engineers can readily access relevant environmental information for project locations across the state. Automating the screening tool will make it more convenient for the project engineers and others to analyze environmental risks and need for watershed characterization work.

C. Integrated Mitigation Guidance Pilot Project Field Tests - The subcommittee developed an Integrated Mitigation Guidance document to promote the use of a watershed approach when making permit and other environmental decisions. Field tests conducted to test the concepts outlined in the Integrated Mitigation Guidance were completed in three non-urban areas of the state: US-12 in Walla Walla County, SR-539 in Whatcom County, and I-5 in Lewis County. In these tests, existing local watershed plans were used as the basis for identifying suitable mitigation sites for highway project impacts. WSDOT regional and headquarters staff is currently evaluating the applicability of using these lists to identify potential mitigation sites.

What is a Watershed Characterization?

A watershed characterization is a technical assessment tool that identifies potential mitigation sites and evaluates each site's potential to maximize environmental benefits. It involves collecting information about the environmental conditions and ecological functions within a watershed to determine the best locations to target restoration/mitigation efforts.

D. Watershed Integration Schedule – The final task given to the Watershed-Based Mitigation subcommittee was to develop a schedule to integrate its technical, policy, and procedural tools. The subcommittee is in the process of finalizing a “road map” (a detailed set of directions) to meet the subcommittee’s overall goal to institutionalize a watershed-based approach to environmental mitigation. The purpose of the “road map” is to take the watershed approach beyond the field-testing stage and to develop a plan for integrating these tools and concepts into existing policies and procedures.



Evaluating watershed mitigation sites for the SR-539 project.

What are the next steps for the Watershed-Based Mitigation subcommittee?

- The Watershed-Based Mitigation subcommittee technical team will continue to assist WSDOT regions in using the transportation-screening tool and seek appropriate opportunities to use the watershed approach in the identification of potential mitigation sites. WSDOT will be evaluating candidate mitigation sites for the SR-167 project starting in January 2006 based on the site information generated using the watershed characterization completed for this project.
- The subcommittee is working on finalizing the “road map” for integrating the technical, policy, and procedural tools developed by the subcommittee by March 2006. This product will be presented at the final TPEAC meeting on March 22, 2006.

2. Permit Delivery Subcommittee

This subcommittee was created to streamline the permitting process. Over the last four and a half years, the Permit Delivery subcommittee has worked to develop tools and innovative approaches for improving the transportation project environmental review and permit decision-making process among federal, state, and local governments. A final report of subcommittee is being finalized and will be presented at the

March 2006 TPEAC meeting. The work of the subcommittee is summarized briefly below.

What are the accomplishments of the Permit Delivery subcommittee?

The Permit Delivery subcommittee focused on the development of innovative approaches to improve the transportation project environmental review and permit decision-making process. The work of the subcommittee includes the work of the former TPEAC Pilot Projects and One-Stop subcommittees. These two subcommittees merged and became the Permit Delivery subcommittee. The subcommittee pioneered the use of Interagency Permit Teams that assisted in the review and permitting of two pilot projects, Hood Canal Bridge (SR 104) and Yakima River Bridge (SR 24). The committee developed several reports and guidance documents including documenting barriers and opportunities for:

- Concurrent agency, public comment, and appeal processes;
- Common permit application and data requirements; and
- Coordination of Information Technology systems to support environmental permitting.

The subcommittee also evaluated and supported the use of web-based permitting tools, including the development of a web-based Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA). TPEAC, Ecology, and the Office of Regulatory Assistance are working on web-based guidance to ensure that permit applications for transportation projects are complete when first submitted and contain accurate and pertinent information to enable first-time processing. The subcommittee is also working on using On-Line JARPA to document draft permit terms and conditions that WSDOT is writing for ten pilot projects.

A. On-Line Permitting Tools

The Permit Delivery subcommittee's work has supported development and use of on-line web-based permitting tools for

Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA)

A JARPA can be used to apply for Hydraulic Project Approvals, Shoreline Management Permits, Water Quality Certifications, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 and Section 10 permits, and Coast Guard General Bridge Act and PATON permits.

WSDOT projects. Key elements of the web-based permitting approach for WSDOT projects include:

1. **One-Stop JARPA Permitting Site** – Development of a web-based Joint Aquatic Resources Permit Application (JARPA) has occurred in phases. Phase I of this project, completed in October 2004, included the creation of a web-based JARPA worksheet and guidance database designed to help WSDOT’s Northwest Region produce complete permit applications. Phase II of this project, which began in November 2004 and was completed in summer 2005, included development of a web-based system for JARPA submittal. Future enhancements may include greater connection and data exchanges to WSDOT’s Commitment Tracking System. The Commitment Tracking System is a new system designed to keep track of regulatory requirements on individual projects. It is designed to improve WSDOT’s regulatory compliance.
2. **On-Line Permit Assistance System** – The On-Line Permit Assistance System is an interactive, query-based application designed to help applicants and WSDOT determine permitting requirements based on answers given to select project questions and the extent to which certain regulatory thresholds are met or exceeded. The output from this system is a customized, narrative report of applicable permits and their descriptions. See <http://apps.ecy.wa.gov/opas/>
3. **Permit Process Schematics** – Department of Ecology developed an interactive website that depicts the sequence and steps associated with a variety of environmental review and permit processes. Permit process schematics, coupled with customized narrative reports, provide applicants and WSDOT with a comprehensive overview of applicable permit and regulatory requirements. See http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/pac/ppds_info/review.htm

B. Pilot Projects

The 2003 Legislature directed TPEAC to select ten pilot projects for WSDOT to “draft permit terms and conditions for

Permit Process Schematics

The permit process schematics are designed to show the responsibilities of the applicant, the regulatory agency, and the public within a specific permit process. They can help applicants chart out and plan for the permitting process.

TPEAC Pilot Projects

US 101 Northbound Truck Climbing Lane (Jefferson Co)

I-5 Pierce County Line to Tukwila Phase 4 HOV (King Co)

I-405 Master Plan: Phase I (Nickel Projects) (King Co)

I-5 from Rush Road to 13th Street (Lewis Co)

SR 106/Skobob Creek – Fish Passage (Mason Co)

SR 539 Access/Improvements: Ten Mile to Badger (Whatcom Co)

SR 270 Pullman to Idaho St Line (Whitman Co)

SR 22/I-82 to McDonald Road (Yakima Co)

SR 24/I-82 to Keys Rd- Additional Lanes (Yakima Co)

WSF Project Edmonds Multimodal Terminal (Snohomish Co)

resource agency review and approval.” Permit terms and conditions for these projects will be developed and submitted using the On-Line JARPA application process. WSDOT is developing standardized permit language for common permit conditions and will be using this standardized language in developing draft permit terms and conditions for these project. It is anticipated that consistent standardized language developed for draft permit terms and conditions may be applicable for use as contract specifications. Currently, draft permit terms and conditions are being developed for the I-5 Rush Road to 13th Street project in SW Region and SR-539 Tenmile Rd to Badger Rd project in NW Region. The draft permit terms and conditions will be included in the On-line JARPA applications being prepared for each project.

3. Programmatic Permit Subcommittee

TPEAC directed the Programmatic Permit subcommittee to develop a "programmatic approach" for transportation projects. A programmatic approach means a permit or other action that covers a geographic or statewide area and applies to a variety of projects or activities. A programmatic approach may allow actions to proceed without individual approval by the permitting agency. TPEAC approved the subcommittee's final report in April 2002, which recommends implementing a programmatic approach that creates common environmental standards between all jurisdictional agencies. These common standards are then used in establishing appropriate programmatic permits for transportation-related activities.

Programmatic permits currently provide coverage for approximately 90 percent of WSDOT's maintenance activities; 30 percent of WSDOT's preservation activities (e.g., bridge painting and washing, bridge deck replacement, and pile replacement); and less than 3 percent of WSDOT's improvement activities (e.g., culvert replacement and sediment test boring).

Future Programmatic Permits

The remaining activities that WSDOT plans to develop programmatic permits for include pile replacement in fresh

water and seismic retrofit of bridge structures located over water. WSDOT expects to begin the development of the freshwater pile replacement permit in January 2006 with completion in June 2006. WSDOT expects to begin work on programmatic permits for seismic retrofit activities in June 2006 with completion by December 2006. In addition to developing these new programmatic permits, WSDOT plans to discuss the performance of programmatic permits currently in place and look for opportunities to improve them and expand coverage.

4. Local Government Task Force

TPEAC directed a small task force to look at potential permitting problems that may exist with local regulations including the opportunity to create general permits under the Shoreline Management Act (SMA) to streamline WSDOT maintenance operations. A final report of the Local Government task force was submitted to the Legislature in December 2004 and can be found at:

<http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/environment/streamlineact/default.htm>.

What are the current activities and accomplishments of the Local Government task force?

A. Shoreline Management Act

The Local Government task force recommended to TPEAC that a streamlined process be developed for how routine roadside maintenance activities will be handled in the shoreline permitting process. The task force drafted guidance to clarify how routine maintenance projects are “Exempt Activities” under the Shoreline Management Act and establish a process for determining thresholds for which types of maintenance projects warrant individual “letters of exemption” under the Shoreline Management Act versus those projects that have lesser impacts that can use a standard “letter of exemption” developed by the task force. The draft guidance provides clarification to WAC 173-27-050 by establishing thresholds linked to the Clean Water Act (CWA) §404-permit process. Based on the work of the task force, the Department of Ecology is currently in the process of revising its Shoreline

Management Act exemption guidance webpage, which will clarify that certain types of maintenance activities may not need written exemption approval from local agencies. Additionally, WSDOT will develop an internal guidance memo that will clarify this process for field staff that conduct maintenance work. The guidance memo is expected to be complete by January 2006.

B. Programmatic Noise Permit

The Local Government task force recommended the development of a nighttime noise programmatic permit. WSDOT worked with the City of Renton to develop a programmatic permit that would result in a five-year permit for nighttime maintenance work along I-405 within the City of Renton. The programmatic approach provides predictability in that permit conditions will be set for a period of five years and will reduce review time by both the City of Renton and WSDOT staff.

The City of Renton and the Renton Public Works Board issued WSDOT a programmatic noise permit in late June 2005. Once approved, the permit was immediately utilized for scheduled maintenance work along I-405. Use of the programmatic permit will be monitored by WSDOT to determine how beneficial it is before applying it in other areas.

5. Compliance Subcommittee

What is the purpose of the Compliance subcommittee?

The subcommittee was formed to improve permit compliance and addressed this issue by adopting clear reporting procedures providing training for construction and operations managers and other WSDOT staff.

What are the accomplishments of the subcommittee?

The subcommittee conducted extensive interviews of regulatory agency and WSDOT staff, as well as private sector interests in order to “identify the existing situation, problems, constraints, costs or benefits and potential solutions from the stakeholders perspective” regarding environmental compliance,

The Compliance subcommittee identified training gaps that were filled in the 2003-2005 biennium.

Environmental Compliance Assurance Procedures for Construction, Maintenance, & Ferries Activities

Environmental Permit Overview for Design Engineers

Environmental Permit Overview for Environmental Staff

Environmental Compliance for Construction Inspectors

Compliance Tracking Procedures for Managers

training, and reporting. The subcommittee completed the following reports and documents that can be found at the WSDOT TPEAC website at:

http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/environment/streamlineact/Subcommittee_info.htm#compliance/

- Environmental Compliance Assurance Procedure for Construction Projects and Activities
- Statewide Environmental Training Plan and Estimated Costs
- Interagency Auditing Procedure for Environmental Compliance-TPEAC Resolution
- Environmental Compliance Assurance Procedures for Maintenance and Ferries Projects and Activities
- Environmental Permit Overview courses for Design Engineers, Environmental Staff, and Construction Inspectors

In addition, the subcommittee established enhanced environmental training for staff to ensure that permit terms and conditions are understood and enforced. While the policy work of this subcommittee has been completed, the following represents continuing needs:

- Continue compliance tracking.
- Consider completing a joint compliance form, and having one agency (United States Army Corps of Engineers or Washington State Department of Ecology) conduct initial inspections for the other.
- Agencies need to do more compliance inspections.
- Training of all staff needs to continue as a priority.

To date, TPEAC has funded training of over 2,000 staff in a variety of areas including ESA compliance, permit training for design engineers and environmental practitioners, field application of best management practices, conflict resolution, environmental compliance assurance procedures, permit

New courses recently developed

Field Application of Best Management Practices

Environmental Awareness for WSDOT Staff Video

Programmatic Permits Training Series

compliance for inspectors, environmental justice regulations, and river mechanics.

6. Delegation of Federal Authority Subcommittee

What is the status and purpose of the Delegation of Federal Authority subcommittee?

The work on delegation of federal authority is complete. Previous findings by TPEAC showed that management and enforcement of most federal environmental regulations that can be delegated to the state already have been. This includes authority for enforcement of Section 401 and 404 of the Clean Water Act; enforcement of the Clean Air Act; and enforcement of solid waste and hazardous waste laws and rules. TPEAC also explored the development and implementation of recovery plans at the state level under Section 6 of the Endangered Species Act. This work was not pursued because it is not directly related to transportation activities.

7. Planning Subcommittee

What is the purpose and status of the Planning subcommittee?

The 2001 TPEAC legislation focused on streamlining improvements to the environmental permitting process, but did not include transportation planning as part of that process. The addition of a Planning subcommittee was approved by TPEAC in December 2001 because of the important role that early transportation planning plays in the permitting process. The Planning subcommittee was charged with reviewing the transportation planning process and making recommendations on environmental information and processes that promote early identification of issues in the transportation planning phase. Further, the Planning subcommittee was directed to frame the issues related to transportation planning and develop a plan to address those issues.

Work of the Planning subcommittee was completed in 2002. A copy of the final report can be found at:

http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/pac/tpeac/docs/Planning_Subcommittee_2002.pdf

The subcommittee identified several possible strategies for more effectively handling environmental issues at earlier decision points including those in the transportation and/or land use planning phases. Discussion and implementation of these strategies requires a broader group of participants than those on the subcommittee. Any discussion of strategies that touched on local government decisions was considered by many to be outside the scope of TPEAC. Discussion on the problem and potential solutions has occurred in other forums but there has been no official commitment by affected stakeholders to work on this set of issues.

The subcommittee concluded that there is a continued need for agencies and governments to more effectively consider environmental issues during early decision-making processes (e.g., transportation and land use planning) that affect future choices for transportation solutions.

Other TPEAC-Sponsored Activities

WSDOT Tribal NEPA Consultation Process

The 2004 Legislature directed TPEAC to develop a model National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) tribal consultation process for federal transportation aid projects related to the preservation of cultural, historic, and environmental resources. WSDOT environmental and tribal liaison staff initiated a statewide effort that is summarized below to meet the proviso language. Concurrently, TPEAC and the Tulalip Tribes sponsored a separate effort tailored to the Tulalip Tribes' consultation interests. The Tulalip Tribes submitted a working draft product outlining specific consultation protocols that may serve as a model for them and for other tribes.

WSDOT's statewide effort focused on consultation protocol meetings to improve outreach and communication with tribes on transportation issues in general, and more specifically, to improve consultation under NEPA. Since April 2005, WSDOT staff has met with 26 of the 29 federally recognized tribes. Consensus is emerging that will help WSDOT to clarify and improve its internal process. In addition, information gained



WSDOT/Tribal Consultation Meeting.

that is unique to individual tribes is being shared with WSDOT regions. WSDOT expects to complete the remaining meetings by the end of December 2005. Based on the feedback from these meetings, WSDOT staff has prepared twelve preliminary recommendations for improving WSDOT's consultation procedures. These recommendations focus on consultation efficiency, compliance, and common understanding and expectations for the consultation process. WSDOT will seek comments from the tribes on the preliminary recommendations. The final product will be improved NEPA tribal consultation guidance. WSDOT expects to complete this guidance in Spring 2006. The results will be added to the agency's Centennial Accord Plan.

Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups

TPEAC funded a proposal by the Regional Fisheries Enhancement Group coalition (coalition) to develop and test a model process for creating prioritized salmon recovery project lists for WSDOT to use in the identification of potential mitigation sites. The TPEAC Watershed-Based Mitigation subcommittee assisted in the design of the model process to ensure that it is beneficial to both WSDOT and salmon recovery planning. From December 2004 through June 2005, the coalition developed a model process and methodology for prioritizing local salmon recovery projects. Six Regional Fisheries Enhancement Groups tested the prioritization tool and provided WSDOT with ranked restoration/mitigation projects lists. WSDOT staff reviewed and commented on the work. WSDOT's view was that the lists of mitigation sites were useful in identifying mitigation sites but questioned how the lists would be updated and/or maintained over time.



Example of a Regional Fisheries Enhancement Project.

Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) Business Process Review of Environmental Permitting for Transportation Projects

In January 2005, the Transportation Performance Audit Board requested that the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Committee (JLARC) staff review environmental issues related

to construction projects managed by WSDOT. The review included an analysis of the permitting process on ten WSDOT projects to identify factors that contribute to delays and identify priorities for streamlining efforts. JLARC was able to assess where delays were encountered and where streamlining successes were achieved. The study revealed that WSDOT and regulatory agencies applied streamlining techniques to some extent on all ten projects. The following projects were identified as having used streamlining efforts that benefited project permitting:

- US 12, Southeast of Pasco, McNary Pool to Attalia
- I-5, Chehalis, Rush Road to 13th Street
- SR 509/I-5 Freight and Congestion Relief, City of SeaTac
- I-405, Kirkland Nickel Project, from SR529 to SR 522

The streamlining tools and actions that helped these projects included:

- Communication efforts (formal partnering, presentations and site visits);
- Clear and complete applications (clear application processes and guidance, consistency across multiple agencies, pre-permitting agreements on design/mitigation, review of draft conditions when permissible);
- Timely regulatory reviews (liaison programs, MAP team, consistent staffing) and;
- Supporting technology (Online Joint Aquatic Resource Permit Application, GIS Workbench).

The complete report can be found on the JLARC website at <http://www1.leg.wa.gov/reports/05-14.pdf>.

TPEAC Successes Steering Committee

TPEAC created a short-term steering committee to develop a vision for continuing streamlining initiatives after TPEAC

sunsets in March 2006 and to strategize on how to communicate results that have been achieved through TPEAC. A strong interest and need was identified by TPEAC for resource agencies, Tribes, local governments, and WSDOT to have an ongoing relationship and to continue to implement and expand on the work of TPEAC after TPEAC formally sunsets in March 2006. The steering committee identified ideas and strategies to communicate TPEAC successes including:

- Developing a TPEAC website
- Holding streamlining workshops
- Using other workshops/conferences as a forum to talk about the results of TPEAC
- Submitting articles to national newsletters on the results of TPEAC

TPEAC Website

TPEAC funded a position to develop a website for communicating TPEAC's efforts to coordinate and streamline the permitting process for transportation projects in Washington. TPEAC members strongly endorsed the development of the website as a way to memorialize and share the efforts of TPEAC. The TPEAC website is under development and will be finalized prior to the sunset of TPEAC in March 2006. The draft website presents an overview of the origins, evolution, accomplishments, and lessons learned of TPEAC and includes the Committee's products and next steps. The Office of Regulatory Assistance will house and highlight the website. The intent of the website is not to provide an academic case study of the Committee, rather it is intended to capture key components of the TPEAC experience and communicate them to interested audiences. By examining the Committee's origins, evolution, accomplishments, and lessons learned, this site provides access to valuable information about transportation streamlining products, regulatory reform, interagency coordination, and the collaborative process. The draft website is can be viewed at: http://www.ecy.wa.gov/programs/sea/pac/tpeac/next_steps.htm)

International Conference on Ecology and Transportation

A panel discussion on Washington's streamlining efforts was held at the International Conference on Ecology and Transportation in San Diego in August 2005. Papers were presented on the work of TPEAC, web-based permitting, programmatic permits, and efforts of the Multi-Agency Permitting Team. The information provided on TPEAC and other streamlining activities was well received.

Next Steps

TPEAC endorsed the continuation of streamlining activities by the Office of Regulatory Assistance with passage of TPEAC Resolution #23 at the December 8, 2005 TPEAC meeting. The Resolution supports the continuation of TPEAC streamlining activities and recognizes the valuable role that TPEAC has played in bringing together representatives of all entities involved in transportation permitting. It also recognizes the role of the Office of Regulatory Assistance in leading the Governor's Regulatory Improvement Program and that many of the TPEAC programs and ideas fit well into a larger statewide work plan and program. In addition to the Resolution, TPEAC is drafting a letter to the Legislature to communicate the value of the TPEAC process and the streamlining efforts produced, the value of the relationships built during TPEAC, and to encourage support for funding for the Office of Regulatory Assistance to continue streamlining efforts.

Post TPEAC Activities

WSDOT and other TPEAC participants agree that it is important to continue support of several of the streamlining tools established by the committee. WSDOT, in conjunction with other state, federal and local agencies will continue to work on the following streamlining tools:

- Permit Compliance

Continue to implement the reporting and measurement procedures for compliance with environmental



TPEAC papers were presented at the 2005 International Conference on Ecology and Transportation (ICOET).

requirements. This work includes updating these procedures and providing compliance training.

- Programmatic Permits

Maintain these permits including carrying out notification and reporting requirements under the permits. Continue to work with the resource agencies to reissue permits and look for opportunities to develop new ones.

- Watershed Approach

Continue to support use of the watershed approach for mitigation and to support the use of alternative mitigation opportunities.

- On-Line Permit Application Tools

Continue to develop and maintain On-Line Permitting Tools.